

An apparatus for automatically turning off a source of illumination in a microscope, comprising a switch operatively arranged to control the illumination source, and means for sensing inactivity of the switch and for turning off the illumination source after a predetermined time period of inactivity. The invention also includes a method for automatically turning off a source of illumination in a microscope, comprising the steps of monitoring activity of a switch operatively arranged to control the illumination source, and, turning off the illumination source after a predetermined time period of inactivity.